Amanda Severance

November 28th, 2009

CEP 451, Section 004

MY FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESMENT ON PATRICK

BACKROUND ON PATRICK

For this assignment, I decided to ask my coordinating teacher what child would be a good candidate for an FBA assessment, and what child’s family history she knew the most about. She recommended to me that I assess a student named Patrick. Patrick is a low functioning student diagnosed with Down Syndrome. Patrick is in the fourth grade but has no reading level and can only write his first name, although it is somewhat illegible. Patrick is also very limited in his speech capabilities. Patrick can verbalize but his speech is mainly unintelligible babbles. But in conversation with Patrick, he seems to comprehend what he is being told by other classmates and his teachers. In learning about Patrick’s family history, the teacher informed me that Patrick is an only child, and comes from a lower income family. In his family Patrick is “babied” by his mother and his father has a bad temper that Patrick tends to mimic in the classroom. The teacher also told me that Patrick’s parents are part of a local Down Syndrome support group along with two of Patrick’s fellow classmate’s parents Willy and Caleb. Patrick’s teacher also expressed concern because both Willy and Caleb (who also have Down Syndrome, but are higher functioning) are excelling academically and will be moving on to the middle school next year, but Patrick is not and she feels that the best placement for him would be a school that focuses more on life skills rather than academics. The teacher also feels that Patrick’s parents are not realistic about his true academic and social capabilities and feel that it is worse to separate the “three musketeers,” rather than to get Patrick the most appropriate education he needs for the real world.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FBA

In doing the FBA I felt that it was very effective. In observing Patrick’s behavior during the weekly routine of the classroom, I feel I was successfully able to pinpoint his specific problem behaviors and their causes, which create problems in the classroom. Also upon showing my FBA results to my teacher she agreed with my analysis of Patrick and told me that many of his behavioral problems will be “talking points” during an additional IEP meeting she is planning to have with Patrick’s parents. During the IEP meeting the teacher’s goal will be to convince them that Patrick needs a more restricted placement such as the special education center-based program offered at Heartwood Schools in Mason, Michigan.

PROBLEMS WITH THE FBA

The only problem that I had in performing the FBA was the lack of space on the document. There were times when I wanted to elaborate on the physicality of Patrick’s specific behaviors or a situation that lead to the escalation of Patrick’s behavior on the FBA, but I had little writing space to explain the actions that occurred. I felt that in writing down an entire situation, or many entire situations I would be able to see Patrick’s unique triggers for his behavior, more clearly.

SURPRISES WITH THE FBA

Something that did surprise me at the beginning of my FBA evaluation on Patrick, was learning that Patrick’s parents cared more about keeping their son in the same classroom as his best friends over getting Patrick the real type of education he would need when he becomes an adult. I was shocked again when I had completed the FBA and realized that Patrick really wasn’t progressing academically at all in his current placement, and as the lessons have become more challenging he has gotten more disruptive because he cannot keep up. I know that the parents make the executive decision when it comes to their child and his or her education, but I am amazed at how the parents, I feel, are treating school more like a social event rather than a place where one learns the skills needed to function in society.

INSIGHTS GAINED FROM FBA

When I interpreted my data I collected, two important conclusions stuck out. My first conclusion was that Patrick’s disruptive behavior such as his unintelligible outbursts, temper tantrums, and restlessness are the result of his frustration from not being able to correctly verbalize his feelings and thoughts. Also Patrick’s learned temper, and “always getting his way at home” contribute to his “short fuse” temperament when he can’t have his way. Classroom examples of Patrick’s temper are punching the computer when he can’t get it to work the way he wants, and breaking the pencil when the led becomes dull. I observed that the most effective technique for modifying Patrick’s behavior was for the Para-educators or his teacher to be firm with him and follow through on their threats of consequences for his actions.

My second conclusion that resulted from the FBA was that Patrick’s disruptive behavior is also the result of his boredom and lack of comprehending during whole-classroom lessons, which included academic course work beyond Patrick’s level of skill. The whole classroom lessons in the afternoons lasted about twenty-five minutes long and contained spelling drills, writing exercises, and sound-letter knowledge discussions. During this class time, Patrick would try to follow along but quickly become bored or frustrated because the material is too challenging. Patrick then seems to feel ignored by the rest of the class and the teacher because they are all focused on the same task, when he was not. It is a this point that Patrick begins yelling out unintelligible babbles, getting up out of his seat, making noise with is hands and pencil. Patrick eventually gets into trouble for the disruptions, by the teacher or one of the Para-educators. I was told after discussing this conclusion I had found with the teacher, that she is implementing a plan to take Patrick out of whole group class time to work on “assembly-line like” tasks in a separate room with the aid and direction of a Para-educator. The teacher says she hopes that Patrick will one day be able to work in a “sheltered workshop” for the disabled, because he loves completing hands-on tasks and is very dexterous.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE FBA EVALUATION

The only aspect I would recommend for future student-evaluated FBAs in CEP 451, would be that students would be able to see a completely filled out sample FBA done before we completed one ourselves. I think a great idea would be to have the whole class read one of the case studies from the course textbook and complete a mock FBA on the study. Then the entire class as a whole would discuss their findings. I feel this would make students feel more comfortable with what the actual FBA procedures and goals are, so that in their field placement they won’t be doing an FBA for their actual first time.